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Mary Lane Gallagher
Western Washington University, Mary.Gallagher@wwu.edu

Office of University Communications and Marketing, Western Washington University

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Gratitude at 29,000 feet
Leif Whittaker ('07) eyes the summit of Everest and upholds family tradition

Total Dedication  Students bleed for a 100-mpg car  Teaching Green  Helping the planet begins in the classroom
ART IN THE FOG

As a morning fog shrouds the giant sequoia at the north end of campus, Assistant Professor Cynthia Camlin's Art students practice drawing the tree’s gnarled trunk and writhing limbs.

The 69-year-old tree at the southwest corner of Edens Hall is the largest on campus by total volume, at 120 feet tall and 26 feet in circumference at the trunk. The tree can be seen throughout Bellingham each holiday season, when WWU decorates it with lights. It was planted in 1941 by Dr. Irving Miller, a longtime chair of what was then known as the Department of Education and Psychology.

WWU’s campus is home to many notable trees, inspiring retired Geology Professor Myrl Beck to write the WWU Campus Tree Tour. Among the stops on Beck’s tour: the 100-year-old Norway Maples in front of Old Main, a rare Empress Tree that “erupts in spring with spectacular blue-purple, trumpet-shaped flowers,” and a Bigleaf Magnolia that in the 1970s graced the yard of a “rustic little house” before it was surrounded by a WWU parking lot.

Read more about WWU’s campus trees at www.wwu.edu/treetour.

Photo by Matthew Anderson (’06)
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On the cover: Leif Whittaker ('07) climbs the last few feet of the Southeast Ridge toward the true summit of Mount Everest. Behind him, climbers wait on the South Summit for their turns at the top of the world. Photo by Eddie Bauer First Ascent/Michael Brown.
WWU's active minds are changing lives around the world

I never get tired of talking about the excellence at Western, from the inspired achievements of our students to our outstanding faculty and the hands-on research opportunities they provide.

Western is increasingly recognized around the country as a premier, destination university. Demand for admission this fall was high, with 11,600 applications from across the state and the country for 3,571 openings.

Examples of Western's excellence abound in Window magazine. But this edition of Window takes you a step further, showing not only the excellence of Western but the tangible accomplishments by Western students, faculty and alumni that are changing the world.

This year, students at Western's Vehicle Research Institute finished in the top 10 in the Progressive Automotive X PRIZE competition, a contest to build an easily mass-produced 100 mpg automobile. The only other U.S. universities to enter this 140-team international competition were MIT and Cornell. Western students are at the forefront of a revolution in automotive transportation.

You can read about Mike Town ('84 and '85), whose achievements in environmental education are simply incredible. The article is written by Western alumnus William Dietrich ('73), a Western faculty member who won a Pulitzer Prize with the Seattle Times. Or learn about the globally important research of faculty member Dana Jack on depression in women and “self-silencing.” The dedication of alumna Kerrie Golden ('89) illustrates how we must embrace the return of our wounded veterans, who have made great and steadfast sacrifices in defense of our nation.

These are notable but certainly not isolated examples. As Western alumni fan out across the state, nation and world they make significant contributions to their communities. Western students, faculty, staff and alumni excel because that is part of our culture. You do more than just hope for a better world – you make it so, with passion, integrity and, above all else, the conviction you will make a difference. Western truly is about active minds changing lives.

Thank you very much for your service.

Bruce Shepard
What do you think about WINDOW?

If something you read in Window sparks a memory, question, inspiration or critique, let us know! We'll run a sampling of your feedback in each edition. Send your thoughts to window@wwu.edu. Or, find us online at www.wwu.edu/window or on Facebook. You may also send a note to Window Magazine, Office of University Communications, 516 High St., Bellingham, Wash., 98225-9011.

Catching up with alums around town and in the bookstore....

Dave Osborn ('68) sent us a Class Note to let us know he retired this year after 41 years with the Department of Defense. "There is great value to me in receiving Window magazine," he wrote. "I read with great pleasure that Bob and Virgie Hayden are included in the Legacy Family of the Year for 2010. I worked for them from 1964 to 1969 while attending WWU (WWSC at the time) and learned as much or more about running a business and dealing effectively with people as I did in the classroom." Dave also made some new WWU connections after reading Window. "I contacted Jim Sterk ('80) at San Diego State University, purchased five season football tickets, and found we had common acquaintances from Whatcom County, mostly teacher alumni of WWU. I also just purchased three of Gregg Olsen's ('81) books."

Our word of the day: grokking

Our story about Bob Keiper's acting class for future teachers ("The Act of Teaching," Spring 2010) got Pam (Hopper) Webb ('80) thinking about what brought her to WWU: a desire to work outdoors and with children. So she signed up for WWU's Leisure Studies program. She's now an English teacher at Sandpoint High School. "While attending WWU I remember a fabulous class dealing with education taught by a professor named Cy," Pam writes. "It wasn't quite what Bob (Keiper) is doing but it still pointed me in the right direction." (Pam's not the only teacher "pointed in the right direction" by Associate Professor Emeritus Sy Schwartz, a beloved mentor who taught Educational Foundations.) Before she was a teacher, Pam worked in environmental ed. "I still like working with children," she says. "Although the sixth-graders I once worked with at outdoor camps grokking trees have morphed into seniors contemplating Hamlet, it's still teaching."

R.D. Brown, one of your students would like to thank you

After seeing a Class Note about the publication of Gregg Olsen's ('81) new book, Greg Cox ('82) also wrote in to announce his own books soon to hit the stands. "The class that had the most impact on me was a course in 'Writing Commercial Fiction' (or something like that) taught by the late R.D. Brown, a professor who wrote mystery novels on the side. I've always regretted that R.D. passed away before I could send him a published copy of one of my novels." R.D. Brown, an accomplished writer who taught at WWU for 25 years, is still remembered in the English Department with a scholarship in his name supporting outstanding student writers. See Class Notes for news about Greg's new book.

More Window online

Go to www.wwu.edu/window to find online-only content including:

- An exclusive essay from Leif Whittaker ('07) on his climb to the top of Mount Everest.
- A gallery of photos and video about the WWU X PRIZE team.
- An interview with WWU Political Science Professor and elections guru Todd Donovan by politics reporter and Journalism alum Curt Woodward ('02).
Soaring higher: The best year yet for Athletics

With back-to-back top 10 national all-sports ratings — the two highest in school history — and a sixth consecutive national championship, WWU Athletics are at an all-time high.

The Vikings placed sixth in the 2009-10 Division II Learfield Sports Directors Cup standings among 310 schools, and first in the West Region. WWU placed 10th in 2008-09. The Directors Cup honors broad-based collegiate programs with success in both men’s and women’s athletics.

Leading the way was the women’s rowing team with a sixth consecutive national championship. No other NCAA team in any division has won as many national rowing titles.

Western’s cross country and track and field teams provided the core of Western’s success. In cross country, the men placed fourth nationally and the women placed eighth, the two highest finishes in school history. In indoor track, the women tied for 14th nationally and the men tied for 16th, and in outdoor track, both teams tied for 18th.

Western also won its second straight Great Northwest Athletic Conference all-sports title — WWU’s sixth in the nine-year history of the conference.

Individuals shined, too. Junior pole vaulter Ryan Brown was a national champion in both indoor and outdoor track. Junior Sarah Porter, a distance runner, earned All-American honors for the second straight year in three sports and placed second nationally in cross country.

Aside from their athletic success, Viking student-athletes have also excelled academically. In 2009-10, 30 athletes were honored by the NCAA Division II Athletic Directors Association for cumulative grade point averages of 3.5 or higher, and 16 Vikings were named national scholar athletes.

Vikings, get ready for Back 2 Bellingham 2011

WWU’s campus will again throw open its doors to alumni, parents and the community for the annual Back 2 Bellingham Alumni and Family Weekend May 13 to 15, 2011.

Launched in 2010, Back 2 Bellingham offers more than 100 reunions, speakers, academic presentations and social gatherings alongside other campus events such as the Lowrider Show, Relay for Life and EndFair.

“We had over 700 alumni from 17 states and three countries come back this year,” says Chris Roselli, the alumni association’s assistant director, Young Alumni and Family Programs. “Although we had planned on hosting B2B every other year, our alumni and students have made it very clear that it should be every year — and we’re excited to do so.”

The weekend is also presented by New Student Services/Family Outreach. More than 700 parents of Western students attended B2B in 2010.

In 2011, the College of Business and Economics and the College of Fine and Performing Arts will host reunions and combine their efforts to bring a keynote speaker to campus. Early plans for the 2011 event also include reunions for the Ethnic Student Center and the Engineering Technology Department.

Roselli would also like to include more opportunities for alumni to see students’ scholarly work. And he wants to amp up the entertainment.

“I want to get a big name in concert,” he says, “in Red Square.”

An intern heads east to help ‘Green the Capitol’

As an intern in the U.S. Capitol, Reid Haefer ('10) became the eyes and ears of the House of Representatives’ Green the Capitol initiative.

Green the Capitol, a massive undertaking to reduce the carbon footprint of the nation’s largest legislative body, (See “Green House Master,” Spring 2009) is coordinated by the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives and the Capitol Architect. After graduating in June with a degree in Environmental Studies and a minor in Sustainable Design, Haefer interned in both offices for several months.

Western is only the second school in the country to send an intern to Washington, D.C., for Green the Capitol. The House’s former Chief Administrative Officer, Dan Beard ('66), chose WWU for the internship because of Huxley College of the Environment’s outstanding reputation.

Haefer helped with many sustainability initiatives, from boosting energy efficiency to promoting sustainable design. He also analyzed and clarified data for decision-makers in high-level meetings.

And Haefer was asked to “green” the office as a part-time intern for U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen of Washington state. While urging busy legislative aides to compost and recycle more, he also persuaded them to re-think their reliance on bottled water. “It would be just as easy to hook up to the D.C. tap water and use a filter,” Haefer says. “It reduces tons in transportation costs.”

After completing his internship in D.C., Haefer is working as an assistant to the director of a small, nonprofit renewable energy company in Colorado. He’s considering graduate school to study environmental planning.

WWU students take their branding research abroad

When Volvo Truck Corporation officials wanted an extensive study of best-practices for brand development, they recently turned to a duo of WWU business students.

MBA student Sara Liao-Troth ('10) and marketing undergraduate Brian Williams ('10) traveled to Gothenburg, Sweden, in March to present their research, interviews and analysis to Volvo Truck executives.

They were accompanied by Associate Finance and Marketing Professor Sandra Mottner, a mentor and former professor of Åsa Rönström, Volvo Trucks’ merchandising manager, Europe Division.

After meeting in 2001 in Mottner’s marketing strategy capstone course in WWU’s College of Business and Economics, the two women had kept in touch while Rönström completed her education in Sweden and began her career at Volvo.

Rönström and her colleagues wanted to give students a hands-on learning experience in international business, Mottner says. And Rönström, who spent fall quarter of 2001 at Western, predicted WWU students would be perfect for the job.

“Working with case studies during undergraduate (courses) makes students ready for the professional world much faster than, for instance, in Sweden, where many classes are very theoretical,” Rönström says.

So Williams and Liao-Troth interviewed top marketing executives at U.S. companies such as Disney, NBC, Starbucks, John Deere, Harley-Davidson, American Girl and others known for strong brand practices. They also analyzed the companies’ financial statements, press releases and other materials.

The Volvo team was impressed with the study - and the students’ presentation, Rönström says. “Working with the students was inspirational and made us stay up to date with branding trends in the U.S. market very effectively,” she says.

More international collaboration is a possibility, Rönström says. She “would definitely recommend a colleague to cooperate with students at WWU.”
‘Bird Herd’ brings prehistoric bird’s footprint to WWU

While investigating a landslide in the Mount Baker foothills in Whatcom County, WWU faculty found a fossilized footprint of a prehistoric Diatryma, a 7-foot-tall, 380-pound flightless bird that lived in the Pacific Northwest 56 million years ago.

The 1,300-pound sandstone slab with the foot-long Diatryma track was later carefully lifted by helicopter to a nearby road and trucked to Western. It is now on display in the WWU Geology Department.

Keith Kemplin ('81), a Bellingham software writer and geology hobbyist, spotted the fossil in May 2009 while exploring a massive landslide in the Racehorse Creek area with WWU Geology Researcher George Mustoe ('71 and '73), who immediately recognized its significance. Fellow Geology researcher David Tucker ('74 and '04) soon convened a “Bird Herd” of people working together to protect the slab.

The newly found foot track sheds further light on the life of this giant bird. Diatryma is popularly portrayed as a ferocious predator, chasing down and devouring small mammals, including small ancestors of horses. But this track shows the prehistoric bird had only small, stubby, triangular claws on its toes, not the grasping talons typical of the carnivorous birds often shown in artists’ representations of Diatryma. The huge bird may have actually used its strong beak to crush tough leaves, and giantism is common in flightless birds with a vegetarian diet.

The new track is being compared to a larger, three-toed track found east of Auburn in 1992. Some scientists initially accepted this first find as a footprint of a Diatryma, while others believed that it might have been a pseudofossil or other artifact – or possibly even a hoax.

“Discovery of this amazing foot track is the first undoubted evidence that these birds existed here,” says Mustoe. “It’s quite a find.”

Bird Herders Sue Madsen, Dave Sonnen and Keith Kemplin, top, prepare the slab, with the foot-long bird print, to be lifted by helicopter to a waiting truck. The Diatryma track is now on display in the WWU Geology Department. Photos by John Scurlock.
WWU's Outdoor Sculpture Collection Turns 50

Western Washington University's nationally respected Outdoor Sculpture Collection marks its 50th anniversary this year. While you may have spent many hours on campus walking among the art, how much do you know about the collection?

**WWU leads the region in public art:** Before the state's 1-percent-for-art law funded public art in state building projects, WWU had already begun a tradition of incorporating sculpture into new developments, largely through grants and private donations. Important contributors include Virginia and Bagley Wright and the National Endowment for the Arts. During WWU's major growth periods in the '60s and early '70s, seven sculptures were installed, beginning in 1960 with James FitzGerald's “Rain Forest,” a bronze fountain now located near the Wade King Student Recreation Center entrance.

**Some nationally known artists are included in the collection:** The collection includes works by five internationally acclaimed artists, including Mark di Suvero, who was at the controls of the crane building “For Handel” in the red paved plaza of the Performing Arts Center in 1975. “We have always chosen artists who are in the forefront of contemporary cultural trends or artists who have excelled and achieved acclaim from art authorities,” says Sarah Clark-Langager, director of the Western Gallery and curator of the Outdoor Sculpture Collection.

**It's not just the sculptures, but where they're placed:** The sculptures themselves surely add to the campus's beauty, Clark-Langager says, but the collection's real strength is its integration into everyday life. George Trakas’ “Bay View Station” creates a convenient pathway along the hillside below the Performing Arts Center – and a place for contemplating the connections between the university and the surrounding city.

**The outdoor collection is going indoors:** Scott Burton's “Two-Part Chairs, Right Angle Version (a Pair),” sit in Haggard Hall at the foot of the formal staircase leading to the library; di Suvero's “Mind's Eye” sits upstairs as well. And the next addition to the collection will be a sculpture by Korean artist Do-Ho Suh, to hang in the architectural wells of the AIC building.

Learn more: Go to [www.wwu.edu/window](http://www.wwu.edu/window) for links to an online tour of WWU's Outdoor Sculpture Collection, and read an excerpt from Clark-Langager's conversation with Richard Beyer, who tells a lively story about the origins of his sculpture, “The Man Who Used to Hunt Cougars for Bounty.”
Gratitude at 29,000 feet

Leif Whittaker stands on the summit of Mount Everest (29,035-feet) 47 years after his father, Jim Whittaker, stood in exactly the same place.

Visit www.wwu.edu/window to read what went through Whittaker's mind the stormy night before his final climb to the top: "We cook inside, melting snow for hot chocolate and broth—anything interesting enough to persuade consumption. Boiling water is lukewarm. It takes great effort to eat and drink here at 26,000-feet on the South Col of Mount Everest."
Our team climbs steadily through the fresh white powder that reflects our headlamps, illuminating the night. Steps and breaths go uninterrupted for hours. My toes are numb, but I can still move them. Am I willing to sacrifice a toe to get to the top? Depends on which toe. I focus on maintaining the rhythm.

A dark red sun rises in the sliver of horizon that remains unclouded. The color and light energize me at the perfect time; we're approaching a rock wall that looks extremely difficult. I clamber up, breathing with deep and frequent intensity. I feel like I'm going to suffocate. When I finally surmount the obstacle, I'm forced to my knees. Something is wrong. I can't slow my breathing. The ambient-air valve on my oxygen mask is clogged with frozen spit. I rip out the valve. Thin air mixes. I can breathe again.

Approximately eight hours after leaving the South Col, I reach the South Summit (28,700 feet). Gaining a view of the last 300 feet—the cornice traverse and the Hillary Step—I can't help but think that my father must have been crazy. A foot to my right, the Kangshung Face drops 10,000 feet to the Tibetan plateau. An inch to my left, the southwest face drops 8,000 feet to the Western Cwm. I can hardly imagine my father straddling this ridge 47 years ago and ascending the Hillary Step without the fixed-linelines that we now rely on for safety. Only now do I truly understand what an amazing feat he performed.

Shortly, the true summit comes into view. I know I'm looking at the true summit because it is decorated with a massive tangle of prayer flags. Tears come to my eyes as I climb the last few feet and Tendi, our lead Sherpa, embraces me. I've dreamt of this moment for what seems like forever; the reality is more extraordinary than I ever could have imagined. For one small moment when I plant my crampons on the summit. I'm standing above everything. Everything. And there is no possible way to describe the elation I feel and the gratitude I have for the people who have made this possible.

But our climb is only half over. My father's Sherpa, Nawang Gombu, said it best when asked what his first thought was upon reaching the summit. He spoke for every past and present Everest climber when he said, "How to get down."

Leif Whittaker is the son of Jim Whittaker, the first American to climb to the top of Mount Everest. WWU’s 2007 Outstanding Graduate in English, Leif Whittaker spent the spring of 2010 on Everest with a climbing expedition sponsored by Eddie Bauer First Ascent. He’s preparing a multimedia presentation of his expedition as well as a book proposal and hopes to climb Denali in Alaska next spring. Find a link to a blog, with more photos, video and more, about the Everest trip at www.wwu.edu/window.

Have you summited Mount Everest? Go to www.wwu.edu/window to see what Huxley College of the Environment alum Carlos Buhler ’78 brought with him to the highest place on earth – and send us your own photos.
Dana Jack’s global research shows those who won’t rock the boat in relationships may sink themselves

In the early 1980s, doctoral student Dana Jack was sitting in class at Harvard when the instructor began to talk about how women approach relationships. It got her thinking about the women she met while working in Western Washington University’s counseling center during the ’70s, talking with many young women who were depressed.

“At Harvard my adviser was Carol Gilligan, who is brilliant and whose work on women’s different voice really struck a chord with me,” Jack says. “She said in a lecture one day that women view the failure of their relationships as a moral failure, and I thought, ‘That’s what all these young women are saying, that their distress centers on relationships.’ At that moment I thought, ‘I’m doing my doctoral work on depression from a relational perspective.’”

Thus began her career in exploring how some women silence their own voices in relationships and how that can contribute to depression. Now an author and professor at Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies, Jack went on to develop the Silencing the Self Scale, which has helped psychologists and therapists around the world address depression in women.
More to learn: Dana Jack next wants to “get past this dichotomy of gender” and explore self-silencing in men. Photo by Mark Malijan

Where did the Silencing the Self Scale come from?
It came from a study of a very small group of women. I listened to the moral themes in their interviews, when they would say “I’m a failure, I’m worthless,” things you say when you’re really depressed. But if you follow the themes, and ask “what do you mean,” they would talk about their relationships and how they weren’t working and how it was their fault.

Your research has now been used across the world, and in 2001 you traveled to Nepal to study women and relationships there. Why Nepal?
I wanted to immerse myself in a radically different culture and explore depression and self-silencing in a place where women’s voices are not encouraged and they are expected to be silent and submissive. I had a wonderful experience teaching in a Nepalese graduate women’s studies program while at the same time doing research on depression in government clinics, and what I wanted to know is what happens in a culture when women are told, “You can’t really say anything. You don’t have very many rights at all.”

How did your experience in Nepal influence your research of the last 10 years?
It made me want to do this book (“Silencing the Self Across Cultures”), made me want to look at what other people are finding in other cultures. I was very lucky, because researchers (already) had been writing me about what they were finding in other countries.

What’s next for you?
I plan to go to New York University and meet with collaborators on an article, then set out my next research agenda, which will be exploring self-silencing in men. I’m interested in working on this puzzle of gender and self-silencing. What I’m really excited about are two things: One is that men are relational, and this scale shows that self-silencing is not good for anybody. But it also gets us past this dichotomy or binary of gender — men are like this, women are like this — which is destructive to both genders. So I’m taking fall quarter off from teaching to do research.

Dana Crowley Jack
Profession: Professor, Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies.
Education: Doctorate, Harvard University, 1984; Master of Social Work, University of Washington, 1972; Bachelor’s degree from Mount Holyoke College, 1967.
Professional achievements: 2002 Paul J. Olscamp Research Award, presented annually to a WWU faculty member for outstanding research; Fulbright Scholar to Nepal, 2001
What’s next: Taking a break from teaching fall quarter to focus on research; exploring self-silencing in men.
TOTAL dedication

Story and photos by Matthew Anderson ('06)

DON HAYWARD TAKES ONE LOOK UNDER THE HOOD OF THE SLEEK, MODERN CAR AND FROWNS.

The longtime auto racing guru is staring at Viking 45, Western Washington University's ultra-fuel-efficient entry in the Progressive Automotive X PRIZE competition, and he's perplexed.

“What I saw was a wad of wires on top of 14 WINDOW • Fall 2010 • Western Washington University
Alone in the crowd: WWU's Viking 45, center, appears in a parade during the X PRIZE finals as the only hybrid vehicle to make it to the last round of competition. In fact, the car could draw on three separate sources of power: two electric motors and one gasoline engine.

some structure that I couldn’t understand,” Hayward would later recount. “I frankly thought that this car was not appropriate for this competition.”

This is the shakedown stage of the X PRIZE, when serious contenders are separated from also-rans. Hayward, a consulting engineer at Grand Am who notes stints with Rahal Letterman Racing and Ford Motor Company Racing on his resume, should know an also-ran when he sees one.

He begins listing the problems for the students gathered around: Occupants aren’t fully sealed from the engine compartment. There is no horn or windshield wiper. The complicated electrical system has several ground faults and not enough weatherstripping to prevent water from ruining the electronics or creating a shock hazard.

“It’s a pretty stressful experience, being ripped apart like that,” says Kyle Foley, the team’s crew chief, “but it’s also a really good learning experience.”

As far as Hayward is concerned, Western’s run in this four-year, $10-million competition is over. Of the 136 vehicles that began the contest, only 27 would move past the shakedown stage. WWU would not be among them, Hayward thought after grading Viking 45. But while he got a good look at the car, Hayward didn’t know the students who built it. They had no intention of going home.

Continued on page 16.
Continued from page 15.

AFTER HEARING Hayward’s report, the students look around at each other. It’s quiet for a second. Members of at least one rival team wonder if the students might soon be available to join their crews. Instead, the students pull out a huge whiteboard and begin listing each problem alongside the name of a team member assigned to take care of it. An hour later, 24 items are slated to be fixed.

“We’ve come this far, and if there’s an opportunity to keep going, we will,” says Leif Olsen, who celebrated his 23rd birthday at the team’s rental house flying a toy helicopter bought for him at the local Radio Shack. “I’ve never worked this hard in my life. You’ve got to be kind of crazy to not sleep to build a car.”

The members of the WWU X PRIZE Team had started assembling Viking 45 in December 2009, with less than five months to build their car and get it to Michigan. Working from the prototype Viking 40 they had built the year before, the students spent long hours in the shop getting Viking 45 ready for competition.

“It almost becomes an obsession; you don’t want to leave,” Foley says. “There’s not one guy who hasn’t bled over this car; I guarantee it.”

They named the car “Sheila,” deciding anything they spent this much time with had to have a name.

“An 18-hour day was a good day,” remembers Olsen, “because that meant I got to go home and actually sleep.”

The hours together have forged a trust that is evident in the way the students attack the to-do list. They dive in and out of the car, soldering wires, securing cables and adjusting suspension components.

Before long, the WWU team has overcome the laundry list of problems and cleared the shakedown stage.

They’ve also earned the respect of their fellow competitors.

“We watched them go through some really hard times, and they were true gentlemen about it, even though they were so young,” says Oliver Kuttner, head of the rival Edison2 team. “They are a class act.”

“They’re very passionate about it, and they’re very self-sacrificing,” adds Marques McCammon, the chief marketing officer for the Aptera team. “I watch their work ethic, I watch the way they interact with each other, and I’m impressed.”

SINCE WESTERN’S Vehicle Research Institute was founded 35 years ago, its students have known much success. Their vehicles have set records in the Australian Outback, up Pike’s Peak and around the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Students come from afar to attend the VRI, but for the most part they’re just local kids who love cars.
"THERE'S NOT ONE GUY WHO HASN'T BLED OVER THIS CAR; I GUARANTEE IT."

They enroll in the VRI to bang their knuckles under the hood of a car, to learn about teamwork and camaraderie, to test the limits of what's possible with a set of wheels and an open mind.

That's why Eric Leonhardt, the faculty director of the VRI, pushed his students to join this contest. The Progressive Automotive X PRIZE competition was designed to glean from the world's inventors a vehicle that gets more than 100 miles per gallon, is relatively environmentally friendly and can be mass-produced for consumers.

"I can't imagine any other way to bring these lessons home to these students," Leonhardt says. "Technical lessons, interpersonal skills, time management, leadership — these are all things that we've learned here."

They've done well, too, having outlasted all other U.S. universities, including Cornell University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and India auto giant Tata Motors. And thanks to that intense list-driven scramble during the semifinals, they breeze through the knockout stage, too.

A MONTH later, members are back in Michigan for the finals.

The events, which include the 100-mile range test and several fuel efficiency trials, go well. On the track Viking 45 achieves the equivalent of 112 miles per gallon before penalties are assessed, bringing the total down to an impressive 97 MPGe. In range testing, Sheila easily goes the required 100 miles with enough fuel remaining for hundreds more. After making it this far, outlasting all other U.S. schools and many professional car builders, Viking 45 is looking like a contender for the top prize.

But on the penultimate day of the finals, during the emergency lane-change and 60-mpg-to-0 braking events, Sheila's brakes fail and a few of her suspension mounting points start wobbling. Student driver Brent Wise is unable to maneuver the car through the events, and the WWU X PRIZE Team is finally eliminated from competition.

But it's hard to say the WWU team lost. Out of the 136 vehicles in the opening round, Viking 45 made it to the final 10. The students proved their vehicle was viable, their ideas sound. And they proved that a bunch of kids from the Northwest could build a fuel-efficient, environmentally friendly vehicle that industry stalwarts would notice — including Hayward.

"I told the guys they're the ones I admire the most in this contest." Hayward says.

"These are college kids, but they're bright, hardworking college kids. They deserve some special recognition because of their tenacity, their work ethic and their ability to bring this thing home. Total dedication."
TEACHING GREE

Mike Town wins national acclaim – and inspires students to reach further – with a focus on e
While a missile can be aimed across continents, teaching and learning are more akin to throwing gravel in a pond. Sure, ripples go out, but exactly what a university like Western accomplishes might not be entirely clear until years or decades after graduation. Did inspiration really take root? Was a key lesson really learned?

How far will those ripples go?

Then someone like Mike Town, '84 and '85, helps change the world. And you know the collaboration works.

Town got direction in life from Western and Huxley College of the Environment. And he, in turn, has given direction to about 1,500 of his environmental education students at Redmond High School, while successfully
lobbying for new wilderness and pioneering alternative energy in his "spare" time.

And his "pay it forward" enthusiasm and strategies are beginning to influence high school teaching across the country.

After winning a $25,000 national prize in environmental education, Town, 51, is now an Einstein Fellow at the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C., hoping his success at putting high school students in the front line to fight global warming will inspire environmental education nationally.

"I want to do in public high schools what Huxley College did in American universities," he says. "Huxley was the first, or one of the first, environmental colleges in the nation that brought an interdisciplinary, problem-solving approach to environmental education. I want environmental science as an interdisciplinary curriculum to become a common core class in high schools."

His Cool School Challenge to enlist students, teachers and school districts to reduce pollution and energy consumption has gone viral, spreading to about 150 schools across the nation. At Redmond High School alone, the program has cut at least $40,000 from energy and waste costs and reduced the school's emissions to almost 50 percent below the target reduction set by the Kyoto Protocols on global warming. Nationwide, the Cool School Challenge has reduced carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions by more than 1.8 million pounds.

Town's teaching shows phenomenal results, too. He encourages middling high school students to try his rigorous Advanced Placement Environmental Science course. Not only do they try, they succeed. Of 143 students in the class last year, 91 percent passed the AP test for certification and college credit, compared to an average of 49 percent nationally.

"Huxley students gravitated together," Town remembers. "We lived in these cooperative houses and formed a 'food web' to buy food together. Everybody got to know each other. We had potlucks and listened to the same music. They called us 'The Granolas' and we did dress a little differently. But the passion for and knowledge of science was really strong."

Inspired by Huxley professors such as John Miles and his course in environmental ethics, and physical chemist Ruth Weiner, who stressed the importance of rigorous quantitative analysis, Town began to have academic success. What
"I want to do in public high schools what Huxley College did in American universities."
Mike Town’s reputation as an environmental educator has reached a national level. Earlier this spring, Town was awarded a $25,000 Green Prize in Public Education, the first award of its kind from the NEA Foundation. He used a portion of the money to double the solar photovoltaic panel array at his home that feeds electricity into the Puget Sound Energy grid.

The awards keep piling up. He received the first ever Cox Conserves Hero award from Seattle’s KIRO 7-TV and the Trust for Public Land for his work establishing the new Wild Sky Wilderness near Skykomish, promptly donating the $5,000 to the Washington Wilderness Coalition he worked with. In 2004 he received the Amgen Award for Science Technology Excellence from the world’s largest biotechnology company. In 2009, he received the Golden Apple award from PEMCO Insurance and donated the award money to economically disadvantaged students at Redmond High. And five of Town’s students received the Presidential Youth Award in the White House Rose Garden in 2008 for their work reducing Redmond High School’s carbon footprint.

Western’s education of Mike Town more than a quarter century ago can’t be given all the credit. But the science teacher does say the integrated research on the mountain pine beetle he did at Huxley in the early 1980s taught him the interconnectedness of environmental systems and human activities, a synthesis he uses in his own classroom to excite students.

Town didn’t start off as a model student — more like one of the middle-of-the-pack kids he recruits into his AP science classes.
engrossed him was the interdisciplinary, problem-solving approach of Huxley, very different than traditional science departments. Town helped research whether pulp mill waste from Bellingham’s Georgia-Pacific plant could make fertilizer, and then did his “problem series” research on the relationship between the pine beetle and the lodgepole pine it was devastating.

Other professors who influenced him included Lynn Robbins, who taught courses in environmental policy and impact assessment, marine biologist Bert Webber, ecologist Tom Lacher and aquatic biologist Dave Brakke, then director of the Institute for Watershed Studies.

Science, he learned, was hands-on, practical and world-changing. He brought that lesson to Redmond High, where he developed a horticulture and later a forest ecology course at the peak of the spotted owl wars. Then he launched an Advanced Placement Environmental Science class so popular that almost half the student body takes the elective.

Today, Town’s classroom lessons emphasize the threat of climate change, greenhouse gas pollution and ways to conserve energy or create green alternatives.

“Ecology teaches the interrelationship of all the sciences,” he says. “Instead of abstract math, it’s concrete problem solving. When you understand how forest ecology works, it’s like seeing the woods with a different lens – seeing the forest for the trees.”

Town also takes his work home. His solar array feeds so much energy into the electrical grid that he believes his home is now “carbon neutral,” generating as much electricity as it consumes. He worked on state legislation that requires utilities to pay more for home-grown electricity than they charge consumers, to help subsidize solar photovoltaic investments.

He lobbied and campaigned for nine years to help create the new 106,000-acre Wild Sky Wilderness in Washington’s Cascade Mountains, a “back-door” preserve near Seattle and Everett that is the state’s first new federal wilderness area in 24 years. A low-elevation watershed, forests like this haven’t typically been protected in the past, Town says, which was why preserving this federal forestland was an ecological victory.

Town has inspired many of his high school students to take their own actions to protect the environment. They have worked with local governments, gotten a Starbucks to change its waste stream, pushed Puget Sound Energy to promote conservation and renewable energy and won more than $20,000 in student environmental contests.

Town has also persuaded many of his students to try Western and Huxley. As many as 40 students come to WWU each year from Redmond High, he says.

“I talk Western up all the time,” he says, “especially the uniqueness of Huxley.”

One suspects Mike Town would have done well regardless of his alma mater, but WWU was formative – the right pebble making ripples in the right pond.

“Huxley was the right place at the right time for me,” he says. At Huxley, Town says, “I found something bigger than myself – the environment – and my passion got nurtured there.”

William Dietrich is a graduate of WWU’s Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies and an assistant professor at Huxley College of the Environment. His profile of Mike Town will appear in the Huxley College history book, “Green Fire,” scheduled for publication in early 2011. The winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the Exxon Valdez oil spill disaster, Dietrich is also an accomplished non-fiction author known for his work exploring Pacific Northwest ecosystems. When he’s not mentoring Environmental Journalism students at Huxley, he’s working on the next installment of his Ethan Gage Adventure series of novels.
THE FIRST STEP

‘It’s changing their attitude from hopelessness to “I can do it.”’
When the wounded soldier first met physical therapist Kerrie Golden ('89), he had already struggled two years with injuries from one terrible day in Iraq.

Sgt. Maj. Robert Haemmerle had been unable to move his shoulder since October 2006 in Ramadi, a violence-wracked town in Iraq's Sunni Triangle. A blast from an improvised explosive device had knocked Haemmerle off a 10-foot wall, and he banged his shoulder and knee. Later that day a rocket propelled grenade hit the building he was in; he got a big blow to the head, resulting in lingering problems with concentration.

Doctors initially didn't find any permanent problems, so Haemmerle remained in Iraq and didn't have his injuries treated. There were others who needed more help than he did, he says. But he could no longer raise his arms to pull his body armor over his head — he had to wriggle into it, left arm first, his head buffeted by the ceramic plates.

“It was not fun,” he says.

By the time Haemmerle went on to Afghanistan, a doctor noticed his joint problems and sent him to Bethesda, Md., for surgery at the National Naval Medical Center. The surgeon requested that Haemmerle's physical therapist be chief of the department: Lt. Col. Kerrie Golden.

By then, Haemmerle worried it wouldn't be possible to deploy back to Afghanistan. Two years of neglect had warped his wounded muscles.

But while rising through the ranks to become head of the country's largest hospital physical therapy department, Golden had built a career of getting wounded soldiers to accomplish their own goals, whether it's returning to battle, playing with their children or completing a 10k race with a hand-cycle.

“It's changing their attitude from hopelessness to 'I can do it,'” says Golden, who continues to see patients in addition to her administrative duties.

Physical therapy has been part of Golden's life plan since she enrolled at Western. A 1985 graduate of Mount Baker High School, she enrolled in WWU's pre-physical therapy program, with a graduate degree in mind.

In Professor Kathy Knutzen, she had an adviser she could trust.

Continued on page 27.
MORE SOLDIERS ARE COMING HOME – WITH TOUGHER INJURIES

The Army has improved treatment of the wounded so much that it is saving a record number of lives – 90 percent of those injured in Iraq and Afghanistan survive, up from 76 percent in the Vietnam War. But some of those survivors face a complicated recovery.

“It has become a lot more complex to address all those issues in one patient,” says Lt. Col. Kerrie Golden, who worked with many wounded soldiers as chief physical therapist at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

But with some patients, they’ve proved great things are possible. A boom in prosthetic technology has increased the scope of recovery for amputees.

“We’re able to push the things that can be done,” Golden says.

But many of the wounded soldiers had multiple injuries, so that therapists had to make sure the work they did with one part of the body wouldn’t aggravate other injuries. Some patients had traumatic brain injuries, making it difficult for them to remember instructions or focus on their regimens. And some had survived injuries so severe they would never have survived in previous wars.

Operating beyond what’s taught in textbooks, therapists relied on each other more than ever, Golden says. They talked to each other and to other members of the therapy teams, trying to gain insights on how to collaborate to provide the best treatment for each patient.

“It takes a lot of learning and adaptation,” she says.

On duty: Lt. Col. Kerrie Golden (‘89) is Chief of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Madigan Army Medical Center.
When it came time to apply for graduate schools, it was Knutzen who suggested the U.S. Army-Baylor University's physical therapy program. Attracted to the idea of completing her master's degree without debt and with a job, she signed up.

Life with the Army has meant moving around the country. She met her husband, Col. Robert Taradash, in Alabama. Both were later stationed in Alaska and married in 1994. They had their first daughter, Aubrey, in Texas in 2000, and a son, Levi, in 2005. She got a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Temple University in 2006.

Then in August 2008, she got her biggest assignment yet: Integrated Physical Therapy Services Chief at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and National Naval Medical Center.

Golden was in charge of helping to integrate the Army and Navy's large rehabilitation teams as the two medical centers merged. Even within Walter Reed, groups of therapists were separated from each other due to limited space. As a result, they rarely collaborated. "My proudest accomplishment was bringing them together to work more as a team," she says.

Given that Golden was the top administrator, much of her work was behind the scenes to maintain the Walter Reed physical therapy unit's reputation as one of the best in the country for helping soldiers recover from the worst injuries.

"It takes a tremendous amount of work to juggle all of that so the therapists can take care of the patients well," she says.

When she arrived at Walter Reed, the center had a well-established adaptive sports and recreational activities program, including kayaking, scuba, seated volleyball, wheelchair basketball and many other activities as part of patients' recovery plans. Patients run or hand-cycle -- the Army Ten Miler in Washington, D.C., or even marathons.

Golden also worked with Disabled Sports USA to put together teams to compete in the 2009 and 2010 Ski to Sea races in Bellingham. She served as the Nordic skier on the team, named "Missing Parts in Action."

Tears come to her eyes when she talks about watching the impact of the athletic program on wounded soldiers: "A lot of the time I feel like they've lost so much, and they have," she says. "But when they're out there, they can feel normal again."

It takes a lot of time and a lot of work, Golden says, but there's nothing like seeing the strength and confidence return as soldiers regain their physical abilities.

"You see these people come in and they're inpatients and they're pretty beat-up looking. Later on in rehab, they're a little better," she says. "It's really rewarding to take someone from a really debilitated physical state to a much more independent view of life."

Ten months after Golden and her husband adopted their younger daughter, Rhea, in December 2008, Golden took her skills closer to the battlefield. From October 2009 to April 2010, she was deployed to Iraq, to run the Physical Therapy Service in a combat support hospital in Baghdad. The soldiers she saw usually had the muscle strains, sprains and backaches she was used to seeing in the U.S. -- but she also saw Iraqi civilians.

She particularly remembers a 13-year-old girl recovering from burns from a kitchen accident. The girl spoke no English, but with the help of translator Golden had to gain her trust and coax her body into motion.

"It was hard to explain the necessity of doing physical therapy when it's so painful," she says. "In the early stages, just trying to get her out of bed was very difficult."

Golden improvised a therapy program with her kids' old toys (Mr. Potato Head was a big hit), games and drawing on walls.

"We would do 'Ring around the Rosie,' the 'Hokey Pokey,' anything to move," she says.

Golden didn't give up on the girl in Iraq, and she wouldn't give up on Haemmerle, the soldier at Walter Reed who wanted to repair his body enough to return to his unit in Afghanistan.

Golden set a long course of treatment: bending, stretching and exercise.

"As the days and weeks went by Lt. Col. Golden increased my program, she increased my work and what she wanted me to do," Haemmerle says. "I did much better than I ever thought I would."

After 12 months of physical therapy, plus therapy for concentration problems, doctors pronounced him fit for duty and he returned to Afghanistan in January 2010.

"Am I 100 percent? No," he says. "But who is?"

But he no longer has to wriggle sideways into his body armor.

Golden moved to Madigan Army Medical Center in July 2010 as her husband took over command of the 42nd Military Police brigade at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. At Madigan, Golden is just getting started as the Chief of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. One thing she'd like to do is have the rehabilitative services collaborate more closely with the Warrior Transition Brigade's adaptive sports program to get recuperating soldiers on the water and on the courts.

Golden closes her emails with this quote from Martin Luther King Jr.: "You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."

"It just speaks to possibilities," she says.
In 1971 Industrial Arts students told their professor, Michael Seal ('66), they wanted to enter a national competition to build a car that didn't pollute the air. Western had no engineering technology program at the time, other than a course that had students dismantle lawn mower engines, but Seal and his students went for it anyway. With the help of a donated Toyota Corona that had been damaged in shipping, the students went to work. When they were done, they had built Viking 1, a boxy little car with gull-wing doors and a spare-tire bumper. Inside was a souped-up propane-powered Toyota engine with Oldsmobile parts and an innovative steering system that gave the car an extremely tight turning radius.

Viking 1 debuted in August 1972 at the Urban Vehicle Design Competition at the General Motors Proving Grounds in Milford, Mich., and wowed the judges. The car's "extreme Ackerman steering" enabled the car to parallel-park in a space just 10 inches longer than the car itself. Viking 1 took home the "parkability" award and won the internal combustion engine class, finishing third overall, behind the University of British Columbia and the University of Florida. The students also won an award for innovative student engineering. The following year, Viking 1 placed second in the Reduced Emission Devices Rally in Davis, Calif.

Viking 1's success helped land the students a $30,000 grant from the State Department of Energy and Transportation to build Viking 2. It also launched what would become the Vehicle Research Institute and the career of its longtime director, Seal, who became a nationally recognized leader in automotive design education.

And 44 Vikings later, WWU students continue to build cars of the future.
I was recently inspired by a lively conversation that occurred on our LinkedIn group. Alumni shared their heartfelt appreciation for their time spent at Western and expressed growing desires to "give back." Douglas Leek ('99) reflected astutely on his experience at Western and presented us all with a charge: "If we don't help our own, who will?"

While I can't define what connection to Western means to you personally, I can muse about what connection means for our alumni community as a whole.

**CONNECTION:** [kuh-nek-shuhn] – noun, a person connected with another by kinship or common interest.

This summer, I had the pleasure of meeting former Huxley student Julie Mullyeart and her fiance Joe Brown, at their bike shop, Methow Valley Cycle, in Winthrop. Under the banner of Western we shared biking stories and after I decided to buy a gorgeous copper bicycle, Julie graciously drove 155 miles from Winthrop to Bellingham to deliver it to my office in the Alumni House! Only a Western alumna would do this, I'm certain.

In July, the day before the Golden Vikings Reunion, I was pleasantly surprised to meet Norborn Felton ('51) sitting on our couch in the alumni office. He came by the house with one intention: to write a check for a student scholarship. Norborn is an inspiring example of a Western alumnus preserving the Western Experience.

It's always a treat when we can be a part of the magic that happens when alumni return to campus, as it was with Kelli Byrne ('94), who brought her husband, Kevin, and two children all the way from Philadelphia. Kelli hadn't been back on campus since graduation! We offered the Byrne family a customized tour of campus; Kelli visited her old study spot in the library and her 6-year-old son gave the rock wall at the Wade King Student Recreation Center a try.

I believe we are all connected and share a common interest: ensuring the Western Experience lives on. Douglas, Julie, Norborn and Kelli are just four of the hundreds of inspiring alumni stories that support the Western Alumni Association goal to become the most connected alumni community in the nation.

We need your help reaching our goal. After all, if we don't help our own, who will?

**ASK! – CONNECTING ALUMNI AND STUDENTS**

*Ask*! is an online network designed exclusively for the Western community. By sharing accomplishments, insights and connections, alumni can help students network and grow professionally. Sharing stories from your days at Western is encouraged!

Sign up to become an *Ask*! mentor today: www.wwualumni.com/ask
Who’s calling from WWU?

When a WWU student calls during the annual Phonathon, take a moment to chat with someone who may be walking in your footsteps.

Lindsey Mayer:
Senior, Port Townsend resident, WWU Phonathon caller.

Major:
Planning and Environmental Policy. Introduction to Environmental Study and Sustainability was one of my first courses at Western. It's the reason I chose Huxley College.

Favorite place to study on campus:
On a nice day I love to sit and study on the Stadium Piece sculpture.

Best place to go in Bellingham:
Locust Beach during low tide.

Amount raised for Western to date:
Just over $25,000!

Favorite Phonathon conversation:
I spoke with a woman who had recently graduated with the same degree I am working toward. I really enjoyed hearing where her degree had taken her professionally and about her life after Western.

Future plans:
I hope to enter a career field fostering sustainable urban development practices and eventually return to graduate school. Most of all I really hope to enter a professional career path that allows me to positively influence the community around me.

Most ever raised in one phone call:
$10,500!

Why she hopes you’ll pick up the phone:
The opportunity to make a connection is amazing because there is so much to be learned and shared between students and alumni. I can tell an alumnus all about current events on campus and commiserate over funny things like sideways rain while walking to class. It's also inspiring to hear the stories of Western graduates. It makes me hopeful for my future!

Learn more at www.foundation.wwu.edu
Marriages and Unions

1990s

Kelly Ferguson ('99) and Erik Ray on Aug. 25, 2009, in Snohomish.

2000s
Maegan Olander ('02) and Patrick Ortega on Sept. 12, 2009, in Gig Harbor.
Jennifer Fish ('04) and Morgan Ford on Sept. 12, 2009, on Vashon Island.
Chelsie Webb ('04) and Quinn Deskins on Nov. 14, 2009, in Bremerton.
Michelle Catherine Massey ('05) and Hoen James Anderson on April 4, 2010, in Grand Meadow, Minn.
Tiffany Lea West ('05) and Ryan Douglas Van Tine ('06) on March 27, 2010, in Cheney.
Megan O'Malley ('07) and Brian Lau ('07) on May 22, 2010, in Seattle.
Amanda Downs ('08) and Ryan Shull ('08) on May 15, 2010, in Federal Way.
Megan Ellen Lewis ('09) and Aaron John Harvin on March 19, 2010, in Anacortes.

Obituaries

1931 – Florence M. Bowen, 97, on Aug. 19, 2009, in Mount Vernon.
Roger D. Mullen, 96, longtime elementary school principal, on July 9, 2010.
1939 – Margaret Lynn (Collet), 92, a retired teacher, on April 24, 2010, in Temple Hills, Md.
1941 – Edith M. Miller, 88, a retired music and art teacher, on Aug. 9, 2009.
Pamela Palon, 93, a longtime teacher in the National Public Radio board of directors, managed the station from 1947 to 1994 and launched the radio careers of dozens of students.

1945 – Frances L. DeGeest, 92, a retired teacher, on April 19, 2010.
1947 – Robert H. Moblo, 88, retired assistant fire chief with the Bellingham Fire Department, on Feb. 21, 2010.

Survival Smarts

By Vanessa Blackburn ('95)

John Brace ('84) is the kind of adventurous person often drawn to WWU. He has traveled the globe, kayaked the Yukon River and climbed the majestic peaks of the Himalayas.

But nothing tested Brace's courage like the day in 2002 when he was told he had brain cancer and only 18 months to live.

Brace had gone to the doctor because of headaches and vision problems. The culprit was glioblastoma multiforme, a particularly aggressive form of brain cancer that kills 97 percent of its victims within three years.

Sitting there in his doctor's office, Brace knew about medical statistics better than most. He was working as a programmer and project coordinator for Cancer Research and Biostatistics, a Seattle nonprofit organization that manages data in clinical trials related to cancer research.

"Ironically, at the time, I was controlling the data that I became a part of," he says. "When the doctor said I had a 3-percent chance of surviving, I asked, 'What is common among the people who lived past a year and a half?'"

The answer encouraged Brace to continue to live his life the way he always had, despite the diagnosis.

"What I found was that all of (the survivors) have good medical care, they all have a good support group, and none of them changed their lives," he says. "They didn't cash in and travel the world with their kids' retirement, and it was because they believed they were going to survive.

"So I decided the cancer was not coming back," he says. "I decided eight years ago that I'm done with it."

Several operations to remove the tumors left Brace, now 51, partially paralyzed and forced him into retirement. But despite some grueling setbacks along the way, remarkably he has been cancer free since 2004. These days, Brace, who studied engineering technology and computer science at Western, is using his skills from college and career to help research the disease. He is managing data in clinical trials related to cancer research.

"My new reason for living is to beat this cancer through awareness and fundraising for new medical science," he said. "As with any hardship in life, you have to believe you're going to get through it."

Glioblastoma by the numbers:

Glioblastoma is one of the deadliest cancers, with most patients surviving between 12 and 15 months after diagnosis. It causes the most cancer-related deaths in children younger than age 19. It's the most commonly diagnosed brain tumor in adults ages 45-74. Diagnosed in about 22,000 people this year, the disease will kill about 13,000. There is, as yet, no cure.
Did you make it official? Let us know!
If you recently got married or entered into a domestic partnership, share your news with us so we can include it in "Marriages and Unions."
E-mail your news, including your names, class years, and the date and place of your marriage or union, to mary.gallagher@wwu.edu.

Class Notes

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Class Notes

Class Notes
Looking for Help? Ask!

A new Alumni Association program helps students and alumni find virtual mentors

By Liz Hansen ('10)

A new program launched by the Western Alumni Association makes it easy for students and alumni to connect with successful alumni around the world.

"Ask! is an online program where alumni can sign up in our database to become mentors to students and also fellow alumni," says Emily Sallee, a Western graduate student coordinating the Ask program at the Alumni Association.

"It is geared toward helping program participants make connections based on common interests and career-related goals."

Students and alumni can search the database for mentors based on simple criteria, including industry, job title, academic background or student groups and activities, Sallee says.

A current English major, for example, could find other English majors who work at a particular company. Or a Resident Advisor could find former RAs to learn how their on-campus work experiences prepared them for their current jobs. Students having trouble deciding on a major could talk to mentors about their academic experience and how the curriculum is applicable to their professional careers. Students could ask alumni about graduate schools they attended, and if that means moving to a new city, they can find out what neighborhoods are best to live in.

The Ask program is also for alumni to help each other.

"We have a lot of alumni who may be at a crossroads in their careers, considering changing jobs, or thinking about going back to school," says Chris Roselli, the association's assistant director, Young Alumni and Student Programs.

It takes less than 10 minutes to fill out a mentor profile, and volunteers have flexibility in how they want to connect (via phone, Internet or in person) and the amount of time they want to commit.

"If an alumnus only wants to help one student at a time that is fine," Sallee says. "We have to find mentor students based on simple criteria, including industry, job title, academic background or student groups and activities, Sallee says." We hope to be that avenue and give alumni the opportunity to share their knowledge of the working world with students.

The program provides an additional tool that supplements the services on campus, Roselli says.

"It goes beyond our campus borders and goes right into the heart of the work force, where alumni are," he says. "It ties faculty, staff, students and alumni all together for one common purpose, to support the students."

But the new program's success relies on alumni to populate the database with mentors, Roselli says. "Western is known for the graduates that we produce, and our alumni are very successful. But there is a need for an avenue for alumni to share their valuable first-hand knowledge of the working world with students and alumni," Roselli says. "We hope to be that avenue and give alumni the opportunity to give back to Western."

If you would like to help out fellow alumni and students as a mentor, or search for a mentor to help answer your questions, go to www.alumni.com/ask and start today.
1986 – Arleen Burkhalter was a 2009-2010 Teacher of the Year in the Auburn School District. She teaches physical education at Auburn Middle School.

1987 – Keven Graves is editor and publisher of the Nisqually Valley News.

1988 – Lynn K. Fleischbein received a Local Hero Award from the Washington State Bar Association. Fleischbein is in solo practice in Silverdale, focusing on family law, estate planning and probate.

1989 – Greg Johnson was named president and chief executive officer of South American Silver Corp., a Canadian company whose mining operations are in focused in Bolivia and Chile.

1990s – Jeff Franklin was awarded a U.S. patent for a system allowing users to send photos from their camera phones using a “short code.” Short codes, usually just five or six digits, are now used mostly for sending text messages. He’s marketing the plan through his company, Laughing Gas Enterprises LLC.

1991 – Harley Tat lives in Hollywood and just finished a novel set in Bellingham. He has been executive producer of television shows such as “Blind Date,” “Mobile Home Disaster,” “Hard Copy,” “Whacked Out Sports” and other reality-based programs. Longtime working with Rotary and Junior Achievement, particularly with the Seattle law firm of Williams Kastner for about a decade.


1993 – Gregory Baker was named superintendent of the Bellingham School District and received a doctorate in Education from the Urban Superintendents Program at Harvard University. He most recently was deputy superintendent of Portland Public Schools in Oregon. Jenne Hohn, an event planner in Napa, Calif., recently earned the Outstanding Hospitality/Tourism Award from the Napa Chamber of Commerce.

1994 – Mario Paredes became executive director of the King County-based non-profit educational center for low-income children, youth and families.

1995 – The work of sculptor Shirley Erickson was included in the Big Rock Garden Park Sculpture Invitational in Bellingham in May. Erickson’s work is already a permanent part of the collection, and a new sculpture, “World Connections,” was set for installation in the park this year. Erickson teaches welding and design at Bellingham Technical College.

1996 – Corey Potts was named vice president of sales at M2 Telecom, a telecommunications company in Virginia.

1997 – Darin Detwiler, a science teacher at BEST High School in Kirkland, won the 2009 Angen Award for Science Teaching Excellence, which came with $10,000. Detwiler also recently earned a master’s degree from the University of Phoenix and served two terms on the USDA’s National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection.


1999 – Monica Bauer became assistant principal at Anacortes High School.

2000s – Cameron Moorehead became assistant vice president and private banking officer for Columbia Bank in Tacoma. John Veitch became head women’s soccer coach at Western Washington University in Port Angeles.

2001 – Brett Mitchell was named conductor of the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra in Michigan. Mitchell most recently was assistant conductor of the Houston Symphony and Orchestra National de France.

2002 – Lindsay (Wack) Herling is assistant director of development at Washington State University Vancouver’s office of development and alumni relations.

2003 – Valerie Bauman is a politcal reporter at the Associated Press in Albany, N.Y. Casey and Katie Kulla own and operate Oakhill Organics, an organic farm near McMinnville, Ore.

2004 – Renée Dimond became a systems assistant in the information technology department of Saturn Capital in Bellingham. Michael Martin was a 2009-10 Teacher of the Year.
in the Auburn School District. He’s a fifth-grade teacher at Terminal Park Elementary School. Darcy Camden owns Styled Seattle, a personal fashion consulting company with about 600 clients.

2005 — Fiddler Andrew Joslyn has had continued success with his popular Seattle band, Handful of Luvin, which released its new album, “Life Between,” in January. Joslyn also performs with Seattle hip-hop artist Macklemore and with the Passenger String Quartet. Brandon Wolfe, who earned his MBA from WWU in 2006, became assistant vice president and credit administrator at Peoples Bank.

Michael Koenen, the punter for the Atlanta Falcons, was back in Whatcom County this summer hosting the Michael Koenen 2010 All-Star NFL Kids Camp at Ferndale High School. More than 140 youngsters turned out to learn more about football from Koenen, one of the NFL’s top punters, and other NFL players. Neil Diemer is a member of the 2010-11 Western Washington Journal of Environmental Law and Policy at the University of Washington School of Law.

2006 — Terrence Nowicki, a freelance cartoonist, won a national award from Sigma Delta Chi for editorial cartooning in a non-daily publication. His work can be seen at thishistorictimes.com. Nic Truscott is a wildlife biologist for EES Consulting in Bellingham. Andrew Leese is bicycling around the world with his brother, Randall, to raise money for Servo Domini Orphanage in Palayamkottai, India. They’ve already ridden through much of the U.S. and Western Europe and plan to cycle through Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia. Follow their trip at www.orphanride.org. Kalen Hanna became an investor services representative and fund administrator at Saturna Capital in Bellingham. Members of the “jam band” The Acorn Project have released a new album and are set to release another, with tours taking them beyond the Pacific Northwest. The band, which got its start in WWU residence halls, includes Sam Lax, Andy Pritikin, Tristan Currin, Kale McGuiness ('05) and Todd Benedict ('05).

2007 — Wren McLaughlin received the Mary McMillan Scholarship Award from the American Physical Therapy Association. McLaughlin, now a physical therapist in Bellingham, recently completed an internship in Bergen, Norway, where she developed a community outreach program for mothers of babies in an intensive care nursery. Grady Gratt’s new urban fantasy novel, “Bloody Foundations,” was published by AuthorHouse. Hilary Rae Figgs joined the Peace Corps as a community health development worker. In a health center and maternity clinic in Burkina Faso. Her main work includes health outreach and education regarding HIV/AIDS, sexual health, hygiene and vaccination, and assisting the clinic’s head nurse. Jennifer (Yuodelis) Ferlin recently became an operations clerk and receptionist for Saturna Capital in Bellingham. Tavis Highlander designs concept cars and other items for automotive magazines and companies such as Hasbro, Chrysler and Pirelli Tires. His company, Highlander Concept Rendering, is based in Longview. Adrian Kuschneriet is a deputy marshal for the Coupeville Police Department. Nathan Cox’s music video “Bellingham State of Mind” became a viral hit on YouTube. Cox wrote the lyrics to the music of “Empire State of Mind” as an homage to Bellingham. Musician Taylor Holztheimer ('08) recorded the song and WWU senior Rashawn Scott sings with Cox in the video, shot throughout the WWU campus and Bellingham.

2008 — Wendy Carpenter became a firefighter for Southeast Thurston Fire and EMS in Yelm.

2009 — Brian Davis became the boys’ basketball coach at Kentwood High School. He had been an assistant coach at Squalicum High School in Bellingham. Davis graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in business management.

2010 — Cassie Jackson became program officer for the Grays Harbor Community Foundation in Aberdeen, overseeing the foundation’s grants and scholarship programs. Ben Bortner became an investment analyst for Saturna Capital in Bellingham. Asher Gimmis joined the sales and customer service staff of Appliance Depot. Gimmis is also a job coach and mentor at the Bellingham nonprofit organization, which accepts donated appliances then repairs and resells them to support its job training program. Evon Bourn became a staff accountant for Marlys Bourn, CPA in Bellingham. Sarah Pounds became vice president of marketing for the Bellingham-based startup ALLFBO.com, which allows private pilots to arrange services online with aviation companies known as fixed-base operators. Wes Simons is an editorial assistant at Seattle Business magazine.
Most days, Kevin W. Ernest is a serious student, quietly immersed in marine science courses and working at the Wilson Library circulation desk. But at WWU sporting events, Ernest, 20, is anything but quiet.

"I just like to have a lot of school spirit," says Ernest of Bonney Lake. "Why not just go crazy all the time, paint my face blue and go shirtless?"

Athletes can count on Ernest to liven the crowd at basketball and volleyball games as well as cross-country meets. With a blue face, Viking horns and "WWU" painted on his chest, he would be hard to miss even if he weren't whooping it up in the stands.

“He’s like the rally guy,” says photographer Jordan Stead, a senior majoring in Visual Journalism and an intern with WWU Athletics. “He’s always getting everyone riled up, running up and down the side of the court.”

A former intern for Zuma Press in Southern California, Stead’s work has also appeared in Seattle Magazine, the Seattle Times and the Bellingham Herald. He’s now applying for his next internship to launch his career in photography after he graduates in spring 2011.

As for Ernest, he hopes to take marine biology classes soon at WWU’s Shannon Point Marine Center in Anacortes. But the sophomore has no plans to hang up his Viking horns any time soon.
“I do what I can to support education at all levels; I enjoyed my time at Western and thankfully live in close proximity so I can be involved with the university.”

Bob Brim ('70) — Life Member since 1992
CEO, Dealer Information Systems Corporation

Graduated Cum Laude with a combined bachelor's degree in Physics and Mathematics.

Worked as a TA in the Physics Department his senior year.

As a student, lived at home in Custer and carpooled to WWU with a friend.

Wrote software for what would become Dealer Information Systems while working at the family business, Brim Tractor, in Lynden.

Volunteers his time helping young companies grow and develop in places like China and Vietnam.

Also enjoys flying his Cessna 172.
Physical therapist and Army Lt. Col. Kerrie Golden (’89), bottom left, joined recovering patients on the 2010 Ski to Sea team, "Missing Parts in Action."

WWU is committed to environmental responsibility: Window magazine is printed on 10 percent recycled paper carrying the logo of the Forest Stewardship Council, which identifies products containing wood from well-managed forests. Learn more at www.fsc.org.